

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ABU DH 01760 221146Z
ACTION NEA-11

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R 221050Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8033
INFO AMEMBASSY DOHA
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

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E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: PINS, PGOV, SOPN, TC
SUBJ: ANOTHER PRESS ARTICLE ON UAE DOMESTIC DIFFERENCES

REF: (A) ADU DHABI 1621; (B) ABU DHABI 1746

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

1. STILL ANOTHER FOREIGN ARABIC PRESS STORY ON UAE INTERNAL DISPUTES HAS APPEARED, THIS TIME SETTING FORTH WHAT IS ESSENTIALLY THE ABU DHABI POSITION. JUNE 16 EDITION OF AL-ARAB, ARABIC LANGUAGE PAPER PUBLISHED IN LONDON AND DISTRIBUTED PRIMARILY IN EUROPE, CARRIES ON ITS SECOND PAGE ARTICLE PURPORTING TO GIVE BACKGROUND ON CURRENT ABU DHABI - DUBAI DIFFERENCES.

2. AL-ARAB TRACES IN FAMILIAR TERMS HISTORY OF UAE MILITARY REORGANIZATION ISSUE, BLAMING DUBAI RULER SHAIKH RASHID FOR NOT
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PAGE 02 ABU DH 01760 221146Z

RESPONDING WHEN REORGANIZATION PROPOSAL WAS SUBMITTED TO HIM IN 1977. ARTICLE DEFENDS CONSTITUTIONALITY OF SHAIKH ZAYID'S SUBSEQUENT ACTION IN ENACTING REORGANIZATION WITHOUT RASHID'S APPROVAL, ADDING THAT CONSTITUTION PROVIDES FOR POSITION OF AN ARMED FORCES COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF WHOSE APPOINTMENT WRITER ASSERTS IS PREROGATIVE OF CHIEF OF STATE. ARTICLE FURTHER STATES THAT REORGANIZATION HAS IN NO WAYS DIMINISHED AUTHORITY OF RAS ID'S SON MUHAMMAD AS MINDEF.

3. REMAINDER OF ARTICLE DEVOTED TO ASKING, MORE IN SORROW THAN IN ANGER, WHAT IT IS THAT DUBAI WANTS IN THIS DISPUTE. ABU DHABI, NOT DUBAI, PAYS ALMOST ALL EXPENSES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. RASHID HAS ASKED FOR RECONSIDERATION OF ALL EXISTING LAWS YET AS UAE VICE PRESIDENT HE HAD HIMSELF APPROVED MANY OF THEM WITHOUT DEMUR. WHY ALL THE FUSS ABOUT BUILDING A NEW CAPITAL CITY AT GREAT EXPENSE WHEN PROVISIONAL CONSTITUTION CLEARLY STATES ABU DHABI IS THE TEMPORARY CAPITAL? DUBAI IS CONCERNED ABOUT CONSTITUTIONALITY OF CERTAIN ACTS BUT WAS ITSELF RESPONSIBLE FOR BLOCKING MOVE IN SUPREME COUNCIL IN 1976 TO REPLACE PROVISIONAL CONSTITUTION WITH A PERMANENT ONE.

4. ARTICLE FURTHER RECALLS THAT IT WAS DUBAI AS MUCH AS ABU DHABI WHICH SOUGHT UNION OF THE TWO EMIRATES IN 1968, RASHID AT SAME TIME SEEKING AND OBTAINING FROM ZAYID AN ECONOMICALLY IMPORANT TERRITORIAL CONCESSION TO WHICH DUBAI HAD NO REAL CLAIM. IN CONTRAST TO THIS GENEROUS ABU DHABI ACTION, DUBAI HAS SHOWN NO SIMILAR FLEXIBILITY IN ITS TERRITORIAL DISPUTE WITH SHARJAH AND HAS TRIED TO RESTRICT ECONOMIC COMPETITION BY SHARJAH WITH DUBAI. AL-RAB CONCLUDES WITH STATEMENT THAT CONTINUATION OF THESE DIFFERENCES SERVES INTERESTS NEITHER OF ABU DHABI NOR DUBAI; THAT DUBAI'S PRESENT PROSPERITY SHOULD MAKE IT EVIDENT THAT DUBAI BENEFITS FROM STRONG FEDERATION; AND THAT ANY WEAKNESS IN FEDERATION WILL EXPOSE BOTH RULERS AND PEOPLE TO INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL DANGER THAT COULD BE CATASTROPHIC FOR ENTIRE ARAB WORLD.

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PAGE 03 ABU DH 01760 221146Z

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5. COMMENT: ARTICLE SEEKS TO CONVEY POINT THAT DISAGREEMENT BETWEEN DUBAI AND ABU DHABI IS NO MORE THAN "TEMPEST IN A TEACUP" AND THAT RASHID BEING UNREASONABLE IN TAKING THE STANCE HE HAS. ALTHOUGH NOT PARTICULARLY WELL WRITTEN, ARTICLE DOES REFLECT FAIRLY FAITHFULLY VIEWS WHICH WE KNOW ZAYID AND SOME OF HIS PRINCIPAL ADVISORS HAVE EXPRESSED ON SUBJECT OF THESE DIFFERENCES. WE NOTE ESPECIALLY POINT ABOUT ABU DHABI'S CESSION OF TERRITORY IN 1968 AT RASHID'S REQUEST WHICH IS ONE RECENTLY MADE TO AN AMERICAN VISITOR BY ZAYID. WE HAVE NO EVIDENCE BUT NEVERTHELESS SUSPECT THAT AL-ARAB ARTICLE MAY BE BASED ON BACKGROUND INTERVIEW WITH ZAYID OR WITH SOMEONE CLOSE TO HIM (IT MAY BE MORE THAN COINCIDENTCE THAT ARTICLE APPEARED WHILE ZAYID'S PRESS ADVISOR ZAKI NUSEIBAH IS VISITING LONDON) IN DELIBERATE IF INDIRECT BID TO RESPOND TO RASHID'S SAWT AL-UMMAH INTERVIEW (REF A) OR TO AL-HAWADESS ARTICLE (REF B) WHICH APPEARED SAME DAY AS AL-ARAB STORY. BOTH THOSE ARTICLES, AHICH CONVEY DUBAI'S GREIVANCES AGAINST ABU DHABI, ARE REPORTED TO HAVE ANGERED EAYID. LATTER HAS NOT YET REPLIED PUBLICLY TO RASHID BUT AL-ARAB ARTICLE COULD

BE FIRST--IF SOMEWHAT LONG DISTANCE--SHOT FIRED BY ABU DHABI
IN A "BATTLE OF THE PRESS" BETWEEN THE TWO EMIRATES.
DICKMAN

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Message Attributes

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